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U.S. grant to help Racine County tech center

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The U.S. Department of Commerce on Monday announced a grant of \$125,270 to help the Center for Advanced Technology and Innovation in Racine County expand its technology transfer model.

Jon Dudas, head of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, awarded the funds jointly to the center and the Racine County Economic Development Corp. during a visit to the center's Sturtevant office.

The grant is to be used to help the center expand its work to acquire patents from private industry and hatch start-up firms using some of the patented technology.

The investment "will help southeast Wisconsin attractive private-sector investments" and higher-wage jobs, Dudas said in a statement.

Matthew Wagner, executive director of the center, said: "Our goal is to continue to launch new ventures. We've launched three in the last 12 months, and we're about ready to announce a fourth, all based on acquiring underutilized technology from private industry."

Since June 2003, when the center opened, the value of the patents it holds has grown to nearly \$40 million, from \$15 million. Patent donors include S.C. Johnson & Son Inc. of Racine.

"There's a lot of research and development innovation churning in U.S. corporations, but when you dig deeper, most corporations only utilize about 30 percent of all of their patents," Wagner said.

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